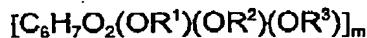


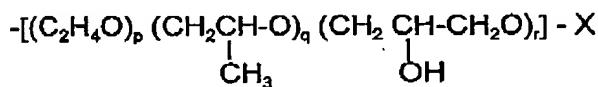
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Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A water-soluble ionic cellulose ether comprising a hydroxyalkylcellulose having on average from 0.001 to 1.0 alkyl group per anhydroglucose unit substitutions and from 0.01 to 0.1 sulfoalkyl group per anhydroglucose unit, wherein the degree of hydroxyalkylation is greater than 2.3 made in accordance with the process of claim 7.
2. (Currently Amended) ~~A cellulose ether~~ The process as claimed in claim 47, wherein the average number of alkyl groups per anhydroglucose unit is from 0.001 to 0.2.
3. (Currently Amended) ~~A cellulose ether~~ The process as claimed in claim 47, wherein the cellulose ether is of the formula



where $C_6H_7O_2$ is an anhydroglucose unit,
m is 50 - 3000,
and R^1 , R^2 , R^3 independently of one another are each a polyalkylene oxide chain of the formula



where $X = H$, C_nH_{2n+1} , $C_nH_{2n+1}O$, $CH_2-CH_2-SO_3Y$ or $CH_2-CHOH-CH_2SO_3Y$,
 $n = 4 - 20$
and $Y = H$, Na or K ,
and in which

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p, q, and r independently of one another in R¹, R² and R³ can each independently assume values from 0 to 4, the sum of all (p+q+r) added over R¹, R² and R³ per anhydroglucose unit is on average greater than 1.3 and less than 4.5, the sequence of the oxyalkylene units in the polyalkylene oxide chain is arbitrary, and the average number of hydrophobically-alkyl modified groups per anhydroglucose unit (DS HM) is from 0.001 to 0.2, and the average number of sulfoalkyl groups per anhydroglucose unit is from 0.01 to 0.1.

4. (Currently Amended) A cellulose ether The process as claimed in claim 17, wherein the average number of hydrophobically-alkyl modified groups per anhydroglucose unit (DS HM) is from 0.01 to 0.04.

5. (Currently Amended) A cellulose ether The process as claimed in claim 17, wherein the average number of sulfoalkyl groups per anhydroglucose unit is from 0.01 to 0.09.

6. (Currently Amended) A cellulose ether The process as claimed in claim 17, wherein the sulfoalkyl groups are sulfoethyl groups.

7. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a cellulose ether as claimed in claim 1 by comprising the steps of etherifying cellulose with an etherifying agent from the group of alkylene oxides and etherifying with an alkyl halide or an a C₁₂ or C₁₅₋₁₇ alkyl glycidyl ether and a sulfonate, with base catalysis to form a hydroxyalkylcellulose having on average from 0.001 to 1.0 alkyl group per anhydroglucose unit substitutions and from 0.01 to 0.1 sulfoalkyl group per anhydroglucose unit, wherein the degree of hydroxyalkylation is greater than 2.3.

8. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a cellulose ether as claimed in claim 1 by comprising the st ps of etherifying cellulose ethers from the group of

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hydroxyalkylcelluloses with an alkyl halide or an a C₁₂ or C₁₆₋₁₇ alkyl glycidyl ether and a sulfonate, with base catalysis.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Cancelled)